

Human Services Commission

Impact of 2012 Budget on persons with developmental disabilities for Budgeting for Results process
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Members of the Human Services Commission:

● **Our State Operated Developmental Centers (SODCs) are dangerously underfunded in this budget**, cut 22% from the Governor's proposed budget, 14% from the 2011 budget. We fear decertification and loss of federal matching funds will result. That is a budget issue this state cannot afford to ignore.

● **Legislators needed and deserved better information.** SODC families went to Springfield and asked our legislators: Why would the *most vulnerable* people be disproportionately targeted? Their answers indicated that many were *uninformed or misinformed* about the consequences of their budget vote. Among their answers: "no one will be harmed," "the facility in my district won't close," "SODC residents can just go to the community where it is cheaper," and "no," they had not seen a Department document illustrating that it will cost \$2 million more in the first year to close an average facility.

● **Community is not appropriate for everyone.** Most SODC residents have come from failed community placements. Our families' experience has been that the community cannot serve our loved ones' extreme needs nor protect them from harm, can refuse to accept them, and can expel them.

● **Now Mabley and Jacksonville have been identified for closure. Where will those residents go?** The closure of Howe took nearly a year and 70% of those residents moved to other SODCs. Despite a seemingly cautious pace and apparent care in the selection of the next placements, thirteen people died following transition from Howe, possibly related to the trauma of transition. This budget does not allow for a cautious pace nor movement to other SODCs. The community, which was already inadequate to support extremely high needs individuals, is also cut in this budget and even more ill-equipped to fill a void left by SODC closures.

● **Some community advocates state that people can be served in the community for \$50,000, a dangerous misrepresentation when applied to SODC people.** SODC residents who choose to and can be served in the community, as well as their potential providers, need realistic funding to make community living adequate, appropriate, and safe.

● **We intend to demonstrate that will NOT be cheaper in the community if supports are comparable to those provided in the SODCs and therefore not a good reason for SODC closure.** We are working on a CILA rate document that costs out services to address the needs of a real SODC client, considered high-needs, with closed head injury, obsessive-compulsive dangerous behaviors, physical aggression, history of PICA, etc. He is representative of many high-needs SODC residents. Our preliminary numbers suggest it may cost three to four times more than that \$50,000 myth,* and it is becoming increasingly unlikely that a community provider would even accept this client (or other high-needs people) because of a state policy that precludes the client's return to an SODC, except for a very limited stabilization period, should the placement not work out in the opinion of the client or the provider.

● **This is one budget that puts all of us, consumers, providers, both private and state operated, in the same sinking boat.** It isn't just our end of the boat that is leaking. This budget does not fund SODCs so that they can remain operational and safe. It does not fund the safe transfer and provision of appropriate services to Mabley and Jacksonville residents, not in other SODCs, and not in the community.

● **This is a budget with no plan.** There cannot be a plan until the truth emerges about real costs to serve high-needs individuals and realistic funding allocated to address those needs. We believe the truth will demonstrate that **SODCs are not only appropriate for many high needs individuals, and their choice, but also cost-effective.**

* We will provide this document as an attachment to this testimony when it is completed.